

1. (Twice Amended) A method of providing media to a plurality of in-room systems from a head-end system remote from the plurality of in-room systems, said method comprising the steps of:

storing a plurality of acquisition media at each of the in-room systems each of the acquisition media having stored thereon, at least one of audio and video data;

storing a plurality of access-only media at the head-end system, the access-only media comprising at least one of audio and video data identical to that stored on the acquisition media;

at each in-room system, providing access to each of the access-only media, such that the access-only media is played by the head-end system and is at least one of audibly and visually presented at the in-room system to assist an in-room system user in media acquisition choices;

at the in-room system, sensing the removal of one of the acquisition media;

upon sensing the removal of one of the acquisition media, activating a check-out timer and storing an acquisition signal encoded with a room identifier and a media acquisition identifier at the in-room system;

monitoring the in-room system for the return of the removed acquisition media; and if the media is not returned within the check-out time allotted, transmitting the acquisition signal to the head-end system and processing the acquisition signal to determine any charge associated with the acquisition.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the acquisition media comprises devices for storing audio data and the access-only media comprises audio data.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein the acquisition media devices comprise any one of a CD, DAT, mini disc and cassette.

4. The method of claim 2 wherein the access-only media is stored on a CD.

5. The method of claim 2 wherein the access-only media is stored in an audio card having memory.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the acquisition media comprises devices for storing audio/video data and the access-only media comprises audio/video data.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the acquisition media comprises any one of a CD, DVD and a video cassette.

8. The method of claim 6 wherein the access-only media is stored on a DVD.

9. The method of claim 6 wherein the access-only media is stored in an audio/video card having memory.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein the access-only media comprises copies of the acquisition media.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein the access-only media comprises a compilation of samples taken from the acquisition media.

BV 3 14. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of processing the acquisition signal comprises the steps of:

storing an acquisition price look-up table at the head-end system; and  
charging the user the price associated with the acquisition.

B3 15 14 18. (Amended) The method of claim 18 wherein the step of processing the access signal comprises the steps of:

storing an access price look-up table at the head-end system; and  
charging the user the price associated with the access.

19. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of tracking the number of times an access-only media is accessed.

20. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of tracking the number of times an acquisition media is acquired.

124. (Amended) The method of claim 29 wherein the step of processing the access signal comprises the steps of:

storing an access price look-up table at the head-end system; and  
charging the user the price associated with the access.

18 25. (Amended) The method of claim 29 wherein the access-only media comprises audio data.

19 26. (Amended) The method of claim 29 wherein the access-only media comprises audio/video data.

28. A method of providing media to a plurality of in-room systems from a head-end system remote from the plurality of in-room systems, said method comprising the steps of:

5 storing a plurality of acquisition media at each of the in-room systems;  
storing a plurality of access-only media at the head-end system;  
at each in-room system, providing access to each of the access-only media to assist the user in media acquisition choices;  
at the in-room system, sensing the access to one of the access-only media;  
upon sensing the access of one of the access-only media, activating a free-sample  
10 timer and storing an access signal encoded with a room identifier and a media access identifier at the in-room system;  
monitoring the in-room system for continued access to the accessed media;

if the accessed media is accessed throughout the free-sample time allotted,  
transmitting the access signal to the head-end system and processing the access signal to  
15 determine any charge associated with the access.

29. A method of providing access-only media to a plurality of in-room systems  
from a head-end system remote from the plurality of in-room systems and tracking the access  
to the access-only media, said method comprising the steps of:

storing a plurality of access-only media at the head-end system;

5 transmitting each of the access-only media over a communications line, each access-  
only media transmitted at a unique frequency;

at each in-room system, providing access to the communication line through a  
frequency tuner for adjustably tuning to one of the unique frequencies;

at the in-room system, sensing the access to one of the access-only media;

10 upon sensing the access of one of the access-only media, activating a free-sample  
timer and storing an access signal encoded with a room identifier and a media acquisition  
identifier and

monitoring the in-room system for continued access to the accessed media; and

if the accessed media is accessed throughout the free-sample time allotted,  
15 transmitting the access signal to the head-end system and processing the access signal to  
determine any charge associated with the acquisition.